

Electoral College Board Game with Quadrants, Home Territories
and Popular Vote Columns

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Steven Alan Wolkis; Edward Martin Wolkis; and Philip Wolkis

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ELECTORAL COLLEGE BOARD GAME, WITH QUADRANTS, HOME TERRITORIES, AND POPULAR VOTE COLUMNS

To all whom it may concern. Be it known that

Steven Alan Wolkis, residing at 16-70 Bell Blvd # 216 Bayside NY 11360	Philip Wolkis, residing at 12 Faye Court Plainview NY 11803	Edward Martin Wolkis, residing at 920 Hopewell Place Drive Alpharetta GA 30004
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All above being citizens of the United States, have together invented certain new and useful improvements in Games, and more particularly to games played on a board with moveable pieces.

Title of the Invention

Electoral College Board Game with Quadrants, Home Territories, and Popular Vote Columns

Cross Reference to Related Applications

This application is based on provisional application serial number 60/448,744 filed on February 20, 2003

Background of the Invention

This invention related generally to the field of games, and more specifically to a board game process relating to the Electoral College, using a unique system of Quadrants, Home Territories and Popular Vote Columns.

Games of this type generally utilize a flat board, which is usually square or rectangular, in conjunction with defined spaces along the outer periphery of the board. A pair of conventional dice is usually employed, in conjunction with playing pieces to enable each player to move clockwise around the board in a continual way until one player is the winner.

Games, and Game Boards involving the electoral process have long been popular. For example, see the disclosures on the following patents.

690,273	12/31/1901	Hambrick	
1,143,210	06/15/1915	Liljencrantz	
1,714,546	05/28/1929	Caldon et al	
2,717,157	09/06/1955	Dylewski	273/135
3,512,779	11/22/1967	McGaughey, Jr	273/135
3,545,762	01/08/1970	Atkinson	273/134
3,525,526	08/25/1970	Kenrick	273/135
4,085,938	04/25/1978	Bean Jr.	273/279
4,299,390	11/10/1981	Delgado	273/257
5,137,279	08/11/1992	Murphey et al	273/257
5,288,076	02/22/1994	Jackson et. al	273/279
5,374,066	12/20/1994	Ali	273/279
5,624,120	04/29/1997	Frank-Opigo	273/279

While many of these games may be interesting, they have not incorporated various concepts, and playing design, detailed in this document.

Our game differs in many ways from other electoral board games. In our game popular votes must be purchased at various rates. By combining chance, along with the skill of deciding when and where to buy popular votes, our game provides for a competitive game environment.

Our game differs from electoral board games in that it uses the concept of a home party territory. A player may acquire votes in their home territory without cost, but opponents must pay to purchase votes in these areas, which adds interest and strategy in determining which moves are best to make.

Our game differs from other electoral games in that it uses a unique process of dividing each state's popular votes into popular vote columns. By splitting popular votes within a state into columns, it allows each player to decide strategy relating to how they want to spend their campaign money, and on which states it would be best for them to spend it on. Influencing factors such as where other players have acquired votes, what is the chance of having enough money to purchase more than one column of popular votes in a state, what is the possibility that another player may remove your votes etc. , all lead to strategic decisions a player must make.

Brief Summary of the Invention

In our game, each player will be known as a "candidate", (the words Player and Candidate may be used interchangeably in this document) and each player will be the favored candidate in a home party territory (also known as the players home quadrant). The object of the game is to obtain enough electoral votes to become elected president, or if a player realizes that no other candidate will be able to obtain the required number of electoral votes to win, to try to win electoral votes in the most states.

More specifically, our game is directed towards the electing of the US president in relationship to the Electoral College process.

Our game provides a new, unique type of Electoral College Board Game, one that helps players to realize the disparate relationship between popular votes and electoral votes when compared by state. For instance, our game helps communicate the concept that one popular vote in Wyoming is worth more towards an electoral vote than one popular vote in California.

Our game helps players understand circumstances in which electoral votes won would have no meaning, such as when no single candidate received enough electoral votes. Our game imitates situations related to the electoral process, such as cases where each state would have an equal say in who becomes president, regardless of the size or number of voters in the state.

Our game helps a player understand the "winner take all" concept of electoral voting, which is currently used in 48 states. In these states, any candidate winning more than fifty percent of the popular vote, wins one hundred percent of the electoral vote of these states. The losers in these states get zero electoral votes, even though they may have received almost half of the popular vote.

Our game helps a player understand how Maine and Nebraska are different than other states, since they are not "winner take all" states.

Our game provides enjoyable family entertainment and can be played by two to four players. Players use their mathematical skills, as well as analytical abilities, to determine which actions would be the best moves for them to make.

Our game provides for both chance and skill to take part, but with chance being somewhat reduced by the analytical abilities of the players.

Our game was designed with the concept that the more you play, the more strategies you will develop for future play, as you learn the complexities involved.

It will be apparent that in a game of this type, numerous changes can be made in the construction of the apparatus (possibly even producing the game in an electronic form), and changes to rules related to playing the game may be made, without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

In order that the principal of the invention may readily be understood, and that further features, objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent we have disclosed a specific embodiment of the game in the accompanying drawings.

Brief Descriptions of the Drawings

(This document is accompanied by ten drawing sheets, which have figures numbered 1 through 23 (plus one figure numbered as 6a).

Figure 1:

The Game Board, which may be printed on metal, wood, pasteboard, paper, cardboard, electronic circuit boards, or other material. A player moves his/her travel marker around the outer boxes on the perimeter of the board. The inner section consists of four colored quadrants, containing states and popular vote columns. One quadrant will be assigned to each player. That quadrant will be known as a player's home territory.

The game board is normally about 24 by 30 inches, but may be any size. The perimeter of the board has 52 colorful boxes, all with various actions that the player may need to make as they land on the box. The number of these boxes on the board may be adjusted as necessary depending on size of board.

The colors for the quadrants can be any four colors, but the playing pieces associated with each quadrant should match the quadrant colors. Each quadrant contains approximately one quarter of the total electoral votes available. Each state within a quadrant has three popular vote columns, which will be used in playing the game.

The name "The Candidates' Trail", is shown on this board, but may be another name that would identify the game.

Figure 2:

Two ordinary six sided dice, with the numerals 1 to 6 indicated on its six sides respectively. These can be any size, shape etc.

Figure 3:

Travel Markers. Used by players as they travel the perimeter of the board. These can be of any reasonable shape and size. There are four of these, and each one should match one of the quadrant colors

Figure 4:

Popular vote markers. These can be of any reasonable shape and size, and match the quadrant colors. Each player gets enough of these in their color to place on any popular vote columns they have acquired.

Figure 5:

Electoral Vote Markers: Colored wooden sticks (or other media such as plastic etc.) matching quadrant colors, in a width and length designed to fit over the popular vote columns of a state once its electoral votes have been captured. These markers should fit over the popular vote columns of a state, yet still allow the total number of electoral votes to show. Each player gets enough of these in their color to mark any state they have captured.

Figure 6:

Play Campaign Money: This money can be in any shape, size or color. It is recommended that it be similar in size to US dollar bills. Different denominations should be in different colors for ease of differentiation, but is not required. The money can be in any denomination, but we have found one million dollar bills and five million dollar bills work well. Each player gets a specified starting amount, and the bank must maintain enough money to be used during play.

Figure 6A:

Player Promissory Notes. These can be in any shape or size. It is recommended that they be similar in size to US dollar bills. Each player will get a specified amount of these promissory notes

Figure 7:

Delayed Action Cards: These cards can be in any reasonable shape or size. The game was designed with 50 of these cards, but the number of cards is not critical to game play. Delayed Action Cards have actions that may be used by a player on their next or future turns. Delayed Action Cards may have historical information on them, but that is for educational interest, and is not related to the functioning of the game.

Figure 8:

Immediate Actions Cards: These cards can be in any reasonable shape or size. The game was designed with 43 of the cards, but the number of cards is not critical to game play. Immediate Action Cards have actions that must be done by a player on this turn. Immediate Action Cards may also have historical information on them, but that is for educational interest, and is not related to the functioning of the game.

Figure 9:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is the box where all players, place their pieces to start the game from

Figure 10:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, that will force a player to move their marker onward toward another box on the board, and will cause them to miss collecting a financial "start" bonus.

Figure 11:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land, that will force a player to move their marker onward toward another box on the board, and will cause them to collect the financial "start" bonus.

Figure 12:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where the player gets to choose if they want to remove another players popular votes markers. The wording in the box denotes how many markers they may remove, where they may remove them from, and what it would cost to do so. A player who lands here must decide if it's financially worth it for them to attack the other player.

Figure 13:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they get to choose if they want to remove another players popular votes markers. The wording in the box denotes how many markers they may remove, specifically what quadrant they may remove them from, and what it would cost to do so. A player who lands must decide if it is financially worth it for them to attack the other player.

Figure 14:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they may perform the action specified on the box, but only if they are the color of the candidate shown on the box

Figure 15:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is another example of a box a player may land on, that will force a player to move their marker onward to another box on the board, where they get to collect a financial "start" bonus.

Figure 16:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where no action is to be taken.

Figure 17:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they get to pick an Immediate Action Card.

Figure 18:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they get to pick a Delayed Action Card.

Figure 19:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they get to collect money directly from other players in the game.

Figure 20:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they are forced to pay money to the bank.

Figure 21:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where, if they have a majority or plurality of votes within one or more states, they can then choose, if they so desire, to capture the electoral votes of one of those states.

Figure 22:

One of the boxes on the perimeter of the board that a player may land on
This is an example of a box a player may land on, where they will get to decide if they want to spend their money to acquire popular votes. The amount of popular votes and the quadrants they may be acquired within are specified within the wording on the box. Depending on who they would have to pay, the amount it costs, how much money they have, and what states are available would all influence whether a player would seek to take advantage of this box.

Figure 23:

One of the four colored quadrants.
This example shows one of the colored quadrants on the board. Within each of the four quadrants is a conglomeration of States. Total electoral votes for all the states listed in one quadrant add to approximately one quarter of the total electoral vote available for all fifty states and the District of Columbia. Listed next to each state, is the total electoral vote for that state, the total popular vote (based on the 2000 census) and the state's popular vote divided (and rounded off) into three popular vote columns.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Detailed descriptions of the preferred embodiment are provided herein. It is to be understood, however, that the present invention may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but rather as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed system or structure. Thus, although the preferred embodiment of the invention is described in these rules, various changes may be made without changing the concept as described.

With further reference to the numbered drawings in this document, the method of play is described as follows.

Starting the Game:

One Player is designated as the Banker. The Banker gets no bonus, or other fees, but controls inflow and outflow of money from the bank.

Each player is given \$15 million (Figure 6) of money from the bank to start the game.

Each player rolls the dice (Figure 2) to determine the order of play. The high roller will be first to play, and first to pick a home territory (one of the colored quadrants-Figure 23). Other players follow suit from high to low order.

Once play order and home territory colors have been established, each player then gathers their popular vote markers (Figure 4), electoral vote markers (Figure 5) and a travel marker (figure 3). Each of these should match the color of the home territory they have selected.

Once colors have been selected, Each player is then also given 30 promissory notes in their color (Figure 6A) from the Banker.

Each player then places their colored travel markers on the START box (figure 9) on the board, and the game is ready to proceed.

Play commences by the first player rolling the dice, moving their travel marker clockwise the corresponding number of positions, and following the action associated with the box they land on. Each remaining player then does the same, following this progression of playing order and movement throughout the game.

As the players travel around the board, the following rules apply:

If a player lands on, or passes START:
(Figure 9)

They will receive what will be known as a start bonus from the banker, which consists of a set dollar amount (recommendations are \$5 million if they pass by the start box or \$10 million if they land directly on the start box). They will also receive an additional start bonus consisting (recommendation of \$1 million for every three of their Popular Vote Markers (Figure 4) that currently residing anywhere on the board). If the number is not divisible by three is to be rounded down to the nearest whole number. If a player forgets to collect their start bonus from the banker, it is still owed to them, but only up until their next roll of the dice. Once they have rolled the dice, it is forfeited.

Once popular vote markers have been converted to electoral votes, no additional start bonus is calculated on these states.

If a player lands on "GO TO THE NEXT REST AREA, PASS START, DO NOT COLLECT BONUSES"
(Figure 10)

The player must move to the designated "rest area" box (Figure 16). The player does not get to collect any of the normal Start bonuses.

If a player lands on "GO TO THE NEXT WINNER TAKE ALL, PASS START - COLLECT BONUSES"
(Figure 11)

The player must move the designated "Winner Take All" box (Figure 21). The player gets to collect the Start Bonus as if they had normally passed the start box. The Player may also take actions associated with the "Winner Take All" box as described elsewhere in this document.

If a player lands on "REMOVE FROM ANY ONE CANDIDATE IN (COLOR) TERRITORY"
(Figure 12)

The player may (or may not) choose to take advantage of this box. If desired, they may remove up to the number of popular votes described on the box, from any ONE OPPOSING CANDIDATE, within the territory as described on the box, for the fee described on the box.

If a player lands on "REMOVE FROM ANY ONE CANDIDATE"
(Figure 13)

The player may (or may not) choose to take advantage of this box. If desired they may remove up to the number of popular votes described on the box, from ONE OPOSING CANDIDATE, within ANY territories, for the fee described on the box.

If a player lands on "OPTION (COLOR) CANDIDATE".
(Figure 14)

Only if a player represents the home territory color specified on the box, and its possible to do so, may a player take advantage of this box. He/she has the option to perform the action specified on the box. If the option is exercised, the player may remove one of his/her opponents POPULAR VOTE MARKERS (Figure 4), from the territory specified, regardless of the number of votes that marker represents. If a player of another color lands on this box - no action is to be taken.

If a player lands on "GO TO START - COLLECT ALL BONUSES"
(Figure 15)

The player will advance his/her TRAVEL MARKER to the START box and collect all START bonuses (as described in this document). The player would be treated as if he/she had actually landed on START.

If a player lands on "REST AREA"
(Figure 16)

No action is to be taken by any player landing here.

If a player lands on "PICK IMMEDIATE ACTION CARD"
(Figure 17)

The player picks the top card, and must immediately execute the described action. The card is then placed at the bottom of the deck. Immediate action cards are designed to either help or hinder the player in their quest to obtain money, and or popular votes.

If a player lands on "PICK DELAYED ACTION CARD"
(Figure 18)

The player picks the top card, and does not notify anyone of the described action. At a future time during the game, the player may choose to perform the action described. Delayed action cards are designed to help a player in their quest to obtain money, and or popular votes. Delayed action cards may or may not wind up being used by a player in the course of the game depending on the circumstances involved. Delayed action cards may be offered for sale, or traded among players, but for cash only.

If a player lands on "COLLECT \$3 MILLION from each candidate"

(Figure 19)

The player rolling the dice will collect \$3 million from each candidate playing the game.

If a player lands on "PAY \$6 MILLION TO THE BANK".

(Figure 20)

The player rolling the dice will pay \$6 million to the BANK.

If a player lands on "WINNER TAKE ALL"

(Figure 21)

Special rules apply to what can be done by a player landing on this box.

A player may only take advantage of this box, if he/she can meet the conditions necessary. Otherwise no action is to be taken by a player landing on this box.

The "Winner take all" action (of capturing the electoral votes for a state) applies to only one state per turn, even if multiple states match the requirements necessary to perform the action. A player will need to determine which state they want to use the "Winner Take All" for.

A player who owns the MAJORITY of a state's POPULAR VOTES (determined by their color popular vote markers on columns within that state, and by the number of popular votes represented by those markers), may exercise his/her right to use the "Winner Take All" function and take possession of all of that state's ELECTORAL VOTES.

If all of a state's POPULAR VOTES have been distributed among the players, and no player has acquired a majority, the player with the most popular votes in that state has acquired a PLURALITY. A player with a plurality may exercise his/her right to use the "Winner Take All" to take possession of all of that state's ELECTORAL VOTES.

If all of a state's POPULAR VOTES have been distributed among players, and NO single player has acquired a MAJORITY, or a PLURALITY of the popular vote (in other words - a tie exists on the state), the first of those tied players to land on a winner take may exercise his/her right to use the "Winner Take All" to take possession of all of that state's ELECTORAL VOTES

A player may not claim the ELECTORAL VOTES of any state until he/she has a majority or a plurality of a state's POPULAR VOTES and lands on a WINNER TAKE ALL box, as described above.

An exception to this "Winner Take All" rule exists. If a player acquires all of a state's POPULAR VOTES (all three columns in most states, or in states with a population of less than three million, all available vote columns) - the player who obtains 100 percent of the popular vote available can obtain immediate possession of the state's ELECTORAL VOTES without landing on a WINNER TAKE ALL box.

Once Electoral Votes for a State have been claimed by a player, they are out of play, and those electoral votes always remain with the player that won them, even if that player leaves the game. Once claimed, Electoral Votes cannot be forfeited, sold, etc. for any reason.

When a player takes possession of a states electoral votes, all popular vote markers are removed from the state, and an electoral vote marker in the controlling players color is placed over the state to identify who owns that states electoral votes.

If a player lands on an "ACQUIRE" type box.

(Figure 22)

Special rules apply to what may be done by a player landing on this box.

A player may only take advantage of this box, if he/she can meet the financial conditions necessary, and if the action described can still be accomplished. Otherwise no action should be taken by a player landing on this box. A player always has the choice if they want to take advantage of this box, or do nothing.

There are various ACQUIRE boxes along the CANDIDATES' TRAIL.

All of these refer to acquiring POPULAR VOTES within one of the three popular vote columns in a state (or multiple states within a quadrant). The instructions within these boxes are specific as to the number of popular votes to be acquired, the amount to be paid, who is to be paid and what quadrant the popular votes may be acquired in.

RELATIVE to ACQUIRING POPULAR VOTES.

- (1) There are four color coded quadrants in the center of the GAME BOARD.
- (2) The names of the 50 states and the District of Columbia are listed on the quadrant's left side
- (3) To the right of each state name there are three POPULAR VOTE columns (specific rectangles containing approximately 1/3 of the total POPULAR VOTES of a state, these will be referred to as a states' popular vote columns). Where a states' POPULAR VOTES are under \$3 million, some POPULAR VOTE columns will show 0 votes. (examples include West Virginia, Vermont)

ADDITIONAL RULES RELATED TO ACQUIRING POPULAR VOTES

- (1) When landing on an acquire box, a player may acquire only one of state's POPULAR VOTE columns on that turn. (It must be the rightmost available column within the state).
- (2) The player may acquire columns in multiple states, on one turn, but only one column per state, per turn, and only in one quadrant.
- (3) The rightmost un-acquired column must be chosen first.
- (4) No fractional parts of a column can be acquired.
- (5) A player may acquire up to the amount of popular votes specified on the box, but has the option to acquire less.
- (6) A player may only "acquire" using cash on hand. No other method of financing is available to acquire votes.
- (7) Once acquired, popular votes may not be sold to other players.

To Win the Game:

The number of electoral votes needed to win the game is as follows:

If two players are playing - The player who reaches 270 Electoral Votes first wins.

If three players are playing - No player wins until all the electoral votes (for all states) have been claimed. At that point, the player with the most votes over 176 Electoral Votes will be the winner.

If four players are playing, No player wins until all the electoral votes (for all states) have been claimed. At that point the player with the most votes over 135 Electoral Votes will be the winner.

If there is a tie in the Electoral Vote count, or no player can obtain the required number of votes to win the election, then the Electoral Vote count is set aside. Instead, each player counts the number of states in which they have acquired electoral votes (one vote per state). The player with the most states wins the election.

SPECIAL RULES RE MAINE AND NEBRASKA

MAINE and NEBRASKA are the only states that do not subscribe to the WINNER TAKE ALL method. In MAINE and NEBRASKA, electoral votes may be split among the candidates.

IN BOTH STATES:

The player receives 1 ELECTORAL VOTE for every million POPULAR VOTES he/she acquired.

The player acquiring a majority of the POPULAR VOTES in one of these states, wins an additional 2 ELECTORAL VOTES. In case of a tie, the first player to land on and use a WINNER TAKE ALL for the tied state wins the additional 2 ELECTORAL VOTES.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

PLAYING WITH THREE OR FOUR PLAYERS

When two or three players are playing, any unclaimed quadrant colors will be owned by the bank. All payments for popular votes in non-claimed territories must be made to the bank. The bank is not considered a "player" but does own the quadrant territories, and therefore payment must be made to them.

When playing with three or four players, there may come a time when a player feels he/she is too far behind to win. At that point, the player has the choice to leave the game, or to remain in the game. Similar to a real election where a candidate throws their support towards another candidate, the player who is behind may try to affect the outcome of the game, by gearing their play in favor or in opposition of any other player.

If a player decides to leave the game, all his/her electoral votes remain as is, and cannot be claimed by any remaining players. The leaving player's popular vote markers will remain on the board, and will wind up being removed in the normal course of play. If any future payments are to be made to the player who has left, those new payments will be made to the bank.

GOING BANKRUPT - RELEASING POPULAR VOTE MARKERS- USING PROMISSORY NOTES

When a player is required to make a payment to the BANK or to an opponent, and does not have enough cash funds, he/she must FIRST release some, or all of their POPULAR VOTE markers in order to cover the debt. The BANK will pay the player \$1 million for every POPULAR VOTE marker released. (Note: There are some DELAYED ACTION cards which may entitle the player to more than the normal value for releasing POPULAR VOTE markers).

A player may not release popular vote markers in order to obtain cash, or in trade with other players. POPULAR VOTES may only be released to satisfy debts owed when the player is out of cash. If a player's current cash on hand and released POPULAR VOTE markers are insufficient to pay his/her debt, only then will he/she then be allowed to use PROMISSORY notes to cover the debt.

PROMISSORY notes will be allowed to cover a debt in these circumstances. They must be paid back as soon as the player has the cash to do so (regardless if it will leave him/her without money again), at the rate stated on the note, which is generally two for one. (In other words to cover a debt of five million dollars, the player agrees to pay back ten million dollars). Players releasing popular votes, and or using Promissory notes, remain in the game, and play as normal on future turns.

ROLLING DOUBLES

If a player rolls doubles, they have a choice to move either the full total of the roll, or one half of the total (the amount shown on one die).